

## **New D.C. Area Mini-Pitch Unveiled to Support Increased Access to Youth Soccer Programming**

WASHINGTON D.C. – Youth soccer players from throughout Washington D.C. were on hand today for the unveiling of a new mini-pitch at Petworth Recreation Center, as part of a national effort to positively impact the lives of young people through participation in the sport.

The event was attended by youth soccer players who are members of DC SCORES, a local philanthropic group that organizes neighborhood teams and runs *Soccer for Success*, the U.S. Soccer Foundation's after-school soccer program. Also in attendance were members of Major League Soccer's (MLS) D.C. United, the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as representatives from the U.S. Soccer Foundation and Musco Lighting.

"We are proud to unveil a new safe place to play in our backyard here in Washington, D.C.," said Ed Foster-Simeon, president & CEO of the U.S. Soccer Foundation. "This new pitch will ensure that local D.C. youth will have a safe place to play the beautiful game and cultivate critical life skills like teamwork and confidence that will help them succeed on and off the pitch. Better still, thanks to Musco's generous support, many youth and adults can play for longer hours with the inclusion of new lights as part of the space."

"Soccer is family and at D.C. United we are a family. That's why it gives me so much pleasure and pride that D.C. United, Musco Lighting, the DC Department of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Soccer Foundation have created this beautiful mini-pitch that is being donated to the Petworth Recreation Center," Jason Levien, United Managing General Partner and CEO, said. "This type of collaboration gives us the opportunity to highlight D.C. United's commitment to increasing the accessibility of soccer and supporting local youth programs. Together with our charitable partner, DC SCORES, we look forward to providing endless hours of free youth soccer programming in this community."

The new mini-pitch supports the U.S. Soccer Foundation's national movement, *It's Everyone's Game*, which was launched in 2017 with the goal of building 1,000 mini-pitches nationwide by 2026 and engaging one million children in the Foundation's *Soccer for Success* program annually. The mini-pitches, like the one unveiled at Petworth Recreation Center, help ensure children living in underserved communities, where there is not always affordable and easy access to soccer programs and play spaces, can benefit from all that the game of soccer has to offer.

"Musco has been a partner with the U.S. Soccer Foundation for roughly two decades," said Jeff Rogers, Vice President of Musco. "This is a great program to benefit thousands of young people who need and deserve an opportunity, and we're proud to support the Foundation in making this happen."

In addition to Musco—which has pledged funding and is donating field lighting for the mini-pitches—the U.S. Soccer Foundation has received the support of MLS, adidas, and Target as national partners of the initiative, as well as participating communities and municipalities across the country.

Research indicates that participation in after-school soccer programs can have a significant impact on the development of teamwork skills, can motivate kids to try harder in school, and can help them avoid anti-social behavior. The newly built mini-pitch at Petworth Recreation Center will serve as a positive outlet for local youth to not just play soccer, but also develop critical life skills, boost confidence, and aid in their personal growth both on and off the pitch.

"At DC SCORES we consistently see that opportunity is crucial to youth development. We support every opportunity that gives kids a chance to play, and applaud the U.S. Soccer Foundation, D.C. United, and its partners for creating another," says DC SCORES Executive Director Bethany Henderson.

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#### **About U.S. Soccer Foundation**

The U.S. Soccer Foundation's programs are the national model for sports-based youth development in underserved communities. Since its founding in 1994, the Foundation has established programs proven to help children embrace an active and healthy lifestyle while nurturing their personal growth beyond sports. Its cost-effective, high-impact initiatives offer safe environments where kids and communities thrive. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Soccer Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) organization.

#### **About Musco Lighting**

Since 1976, Musco has specialized in the design and manufacture of sports and large-area lighting with innovations in light quality, glare reduction, and light control responsible to the needs of facility owners, users, neighbors, and the night sky. Musco's TLC for LED™ system technology delivers a level of light control and uniformity that can't be matched, and is the solution of choice for neighborhood fields, collegiate and professional stadiums and arenas, international speedways, and global events such as the Olympic Games. Musco backs its LED solutions with a long-term warranty covering parts and labor, eliminating maintenance concerns and costs for its customers.

#### **About D.C. United**

One of the founding clubs of Major League Soccer in 1996, D.C. United are the most decorated team in the United States with 13 domestic and international trophies, and the most championed professional team in the District of Columbia. The Black-and-Red have won the MLS Cup four times (1996, 1997, 1999 and 2004), the Supporters' Shield four times (1997, 1999, 2006 and 2007) and the Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cup three times (1996, 2008 and 2013). United have called the District home for the past 22 years and will continue that tradition as they move into Audi Field in Southwest D.C. on July 14, 2018. The state-of-the-art urban facility has a capacity of 20,000 fans and will feature 31 luxury suites, a bike valet, and 500,000 total square feet of mixed-use retail and residential space on site, making it a 365-day destination for fans and D.C. residents alike.